**BRANDS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE EMOTIONAL LITERACY CRISIS**

**ABSTRACT**

The key mission of every brand is to build a strong and long-lasting relationship with the consumer, in a highly competitive world market. To accomplish this mission, brands resort to increasingly creative communication strategies to establish more authentic and personal relationships with consumers. One of the most efficient communication methods is called emotional branding.

Emotional branding is defined as a customer-oriented strategic approach that aims to build a deep and sincere connection. This concept is based on the interaction between consumers and brands, as brands carry out various activities that contribute to the creation and realization of the ideal image that the consumer has about himself. Once established, this emotional connection results in increased attachment with the brand, brand loyalty, consumer satisfaction, and stronger re-purchase intention. In other words, love towards the brand.

In real-life practice, this approach has proven to be very successful, but it also comes with a great risk potential. The risks can be analyzed in two ways. On a moral level, stimulation of emotions can influence the minds of consumers positively or negatively. On a commercial level, because almost every time the brand breaks its emotional promise it causes negativity, rejection, and crises. At the centre of this paper are consumers and the potential risks that arise from a brand relationship. The risks can be viewed in two ways - on a moral and commercial level, and the aim of the paper is to highlight the importance of emotional literacy in interpreting the messages and emotions that brands impose on us. Furthermore, a qualitative study was conducted on the student population, which aims to investigate the level and reasons for emotional attachment to the brands they use, and to explore ways and mechanisms by which young people interact with them.

**Keywords:** emotional branding, advertising, emotional literacy, crisis communication, psychology of consumers